UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Gallagher

DATE: 9/12/75

FROM : B. H. Cooke

1 - Mr. Callahan
1 - Mr. Adams
1 - Mr. Gallagher
1 - Mr. O'Connell
1 - Mr. Cooke
1 - Mr. Nettles
1 - Mr. Bassett

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF
PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY
11/22/63
DALLAS, TEXAS

Reference is made to B. H. Cooke to Mr. Gallagher memorandum of 9/5/75 (attached), which relates to Dallas, Texas, Police Department motorcycle officers who escorted the Presidential car in Dallas on 11/22/63, not being interviewed by the FBI regarding the assassination.

By teletype of 9/8/75 (attached), the Dallas Office advises that one of the officers, James M. Chaney, was interviewed on 9/8/75. He advised that he and officer D. L. Jackson were assigned to ride at the right rear of the President's car and officers B. J. Martin and Bobby Hargis were assigned to the left rear. Eight motorcycle officers were assigned to lead the motorcade in front of the car of the Chief of Police. Six motorcycle officers were following the President's car.

Chaney stated that as the President's car passed the Texas School Book Depository (TSBD), he was four to six feet from the President's right shoulder. He heard three evenly spaced noises coming seconds apart, which at first he thought to be a motorcycle backfire. Upon hearing the second noise, he was sure it was not a motorcycle backfire. When he heard the third noise he saw the President's head "explode" and realized the noises were gunshots. He said that the shots did not come from his immediate vicinity and he is positive all the shots came from behind him.

Prior to the shooting, as the motorcade was approaching the TSBD, he noticed nothing suspicious in relation to the building. Chaney said when the first noise was heard, he wondered about the location of the noise, but is sure it did not come from the front of the motorcade.

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Enclosures

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Chaney stated this was the first time he had ever been interviewed officially by anyone regarding the assassination. He advised that officer Jackson has never been interviewed, but has retained notes he made following the assassination regarding his observations.

A review of Dallas and FBIHQ indices and files reveals that of the 18 motorcycle officers mentioned by Chaney as being in the motorcade, only officer Baker has been previously interviewed by the FBI. Baker was interviewed by Bureau Agents at Dallas following the assassination, mainly because he saw Oswald in the TSBD immediately following the shooting.

A review of the Warren Commission volumes reveals that of the 18 motorcycle officers only B. J. Martin, Bobby W. Hargis, E. D. Brewer, Clyde A. Haygood, and M. L. Baker were interviewed by the Commission.

It is noted from the Warren Commission testimony of the five motorcycle officers above that they were pretty much preoccupied at the time of the shooting with maintaining balance on their motorcycles at the slow speed of the motorcade and looking ahead to avoid hitting anything. The Dallas Office interviewed numerous people who were in the immediate vicinity on foot and had a better view of the area.

When the assassination occurred, Director Hoover immediately ordered the Dallas Office to assist the U.S. Secret Service and local authorities in their investigation. It should be remembered that at the time there were no Federal laws relating to assaults against the President. President Johnson ordered that the FBI put all available means into the investigation and submit a full report to the Attorney General. Thereafter, specific instructions were issued from FBIHQ regarding certain aspects of the investigation, but none have been located relating directly to interviews of assassination witnesses.

Assistant Director Gallagher on 9/12/75, telephonically contacted retired FBI Inspector James R. Malley, who was sent to Dallas on this case on 11/24/63. Malley advised that he came into the office on that day and was told to go to Dallas. C. A. Evans had been in touch with Director Hoover and the Director wanted to know when Malley would arrive in Dallas. Malley went home, packed, departed Washington about 5:30 p.m., and arrived in Dallas about 8:00 p.m.

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Shortly thereafter he received a telephone call from Mr. Belmont, who issued instructions to him to conduct a thorough investigation. He was told to be on the alert for any possible Federal violations and to interview anyone who had knowledge of any aspect of the assassination.

Malley said that, generally, only those persons the FBI knew had information, or who were brought to our attention as having information, were interviewed. Regarding the motorcycle officers, he speculated that they never came to our attention as being persons who could furnish pertinent information. He feels that if they had pertinent information, they should have come forward.

Malley later served as liaison between the Warren Commission and the FBI. He said the Commission did request certain interviews of witnesses who had not previously been interviewed, but did indicate to him that this point had been covered thoroughly in the initial phases of the investigation.

Assistant Director Gallagher has been advised by Dallas SAC Theodore Gunderson that Gunderson has asked former Dallas SAC Gordon Shanklin about this matter. Shanklin told him that he talked to Director Hoover several times immediately following the assassination. Director Hoover inquired about FBI jurisdiction and Shanklin told him there was none. Shanklin said he felt the Director already knew this. Later, President Johnson issued a directive for the FBI to investigate. There were no restrictions placed on the investigation. Shanklin pointed out that the U.S. Secret Service and the Dallas Police were investigating this case at the same time.

There is attached an 11/25/63 memorandum from C. A. Evans to Mr. Belmont regarding an 11/25/63 memorandum from Deputy Attorney General Katzenback to Bill Moyers, Principal Assistant to President Johnson which is also attached. This material relates to the scope of the report to be prepared regarding the FBI investigation of the assassination.

Dallas recommends that officer Jackson be interviewed in view of his pertinent location in the motorcade, in view of the fact he has never been interviewed, and in view of the fact that he has retained his notes regarding his observations during the assassination.

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Memorandum to Mr. Gallagher
Re: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT
JOHN F. KENNEDY

General Investigative Division concurs with the Dallas recommendation. This should not be considered as a reopening of the investigation, but can be done in the interest of thoroughness in view of the information regarding him retaining his notes just coming to our attention. Interviews of other officers are not recommended at this time since of the officers nearest the President's car, Martin and Hargis were interviewed by the Warren Commission and Chaney by the FBI. Several of the other officers were interviewed by the Warren Commission. None of these interviews have cast any doubts on the conclusions of the Warren Commission. Officer Jackson is still with the Dallas Police Department.

ACTION: If approved, it is recommended the attached teletype be sent to the Dallas Office.